



Media Package

Reach Out Now



National Teach-In

Prevent Underage Alcohol Use

April 3–7, 2006



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

**START TALKING
BEFORE THEY
START DRINKING**
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Welcome to the *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In for 2006

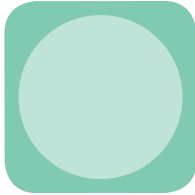
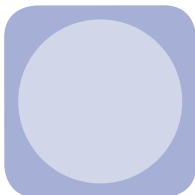
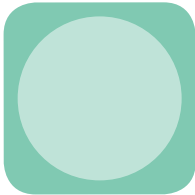
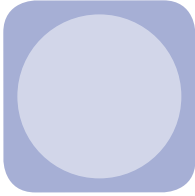
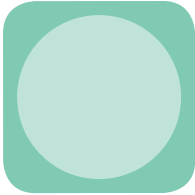
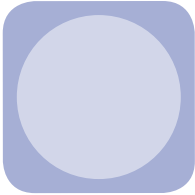
Your organization, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and State and community leaders across the country recognize that underage drinking is a serious public health issue. It is never too soon to begin sending that message to our children. Age 10 or 11 is not too young to start. Your Teach-In is part of a nationwide effort to get this message out to parents, teachers, and others who influence young children and the decisions they make. A child’s decision not to drink creates health benefits that last a lifetime.

Now that you are coordinating a local *Reach Out Now* Teach-In, you will want to publicize it. It is time to involve the media in spreading the *Reach Out Now* message.

This package contains tools that can help you engage the media’s support, and includes:


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The information is presented in template format. The sample materials include blanks in which you can insert the most relevant local information. Use the samples as guides as you develop your own materials. You can either adapt them to include information about your own community, or use them as written. Electronic versions of all text in this package may be downloaded from www.teachin.samhsa.gov. In addition, the CD-ROM included in the Technical Assistance Package contains these materials.






Using the Information in This Package



The media, such as local newspapers, and radio and television stations, are excellent ways to share information with large audiences. An important part of a media organization's mandate is to be of public service. Thus, the media should welcome an opportunity to address the problem of underage drinking. Your goal in reaching parents, caregivers, and others through the media should be to encourage conversations in families, schools, and communities about preventing underage drinking.




You can use an already developed list of media contacts who cover stories about health, substance abuse, and education, or you can put together your own list. Don't overlook community newspapers as potential outlets for raising awareness about your Teach-In and its message. In addition, local faith-based organizations and youth-related groups may publish their own newsletters and be eager to support your Teach-In objectives.

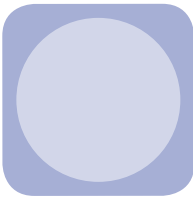
NOTE: In working with reporters, remember that they are frequently on deadline and may not return messages quickly. Be sensitive to their time constraints. Be patient, but persistent. Your *Reach Out Now* Teach-In has an important message to share with your community.



How to Use Key Points



The Key Points included in this packet provide statistics and other information that highlight the importance of the *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In message. When contacting the media to secure their coverage of your Teach-In, use this information to emphasize that underage drinking is a public health problem of interest to the media's audience. Work Key Points into the materials you submit to the media for print or broadcast. Offer them, in advance, to your guest speakers to include in their remarks. These points also are useful to your organization's spokesperson who will be responding to media questions about your Teach-In.



The Key Points include facts about underage alcohol use. For a greater effect and to bring the message "home," add some statistics about underage drinking within your own community. The unit responsible for alcohol and drug services within your county's health department, or a substance abuse prevention group in your community, should be able to provide these data. Using local statistics or a local news story about underage drinking will reinforce the message that fifth- and sixth-grade children in your community are not too young to learn about the harmful effects of underage alcohol use and how they can resist pressure to get involved in alcohol use.



How to Use a Media Advisory

Media are more responsive to requests for space or airtime when they receive information about a local issue and receive it in a ready-to-use format and style. A media advisory alerts the media to your upcoming *Reach Out Now* Teach-In, providing just enough information to encourage reporters to cover the event.

An advisory includes only the highlights of your event in outline form: who, what, where, when, why, contact information, and interview opportunities. When selecting a contact

person, remember that this individual must be available to take calls in advance and on the day of the event. Include a short paragraph giving a minimum of helpful background information. Lead off your media advisory, as well as other information you submit to media, with a short informative or catchy title to draw attention to your message. The intent is to get the reporter to cover your Teach-In event.

Send the advisory a week in advance of your Teach-In so reporters can schedule coverage.

How to Use a Pitch Letter

A personal approach can make all the difference in getting media coverage for your Teach-In. A pitch letter is an effective way to garner media coverage. More informal than a press release and more substantial than a media advisory, the pitch letter gives a reporter both a story idea and the information needed to get started. Your pitch letter should include a brief description of your *Reach Out Now* Teach-In and key facts underlining its importance to your community and to children's health. Include a contact name and telephone number to make it easy for the reporter to get more information.

Send pitch letters a week in advance of your event. Make a follow-up call the next day to be sure the reporter received your information and to encourage coverage.

How to Use a Press Release

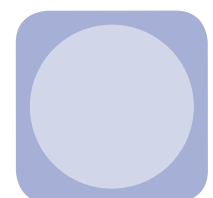
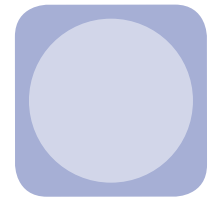
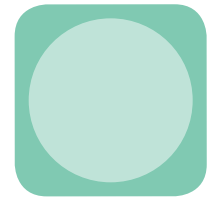
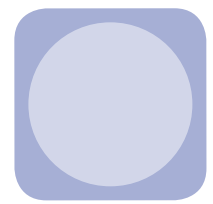
A press release, usually one to two pages in length, provides complete information the media can use to write a story on your event. The general format for a press release includes an introductory paragraph providing the "who, what, when, where, and why" of an event; in other words, all of the essential information. The next one or two paragraphs contain supporting information. Quotes by key local leaders or individuals involved in the Teach-In can make this information more lively and interesting. The final paragraph generally describes the sponsoring organizations. When issuing your press release, use printed letterhead. Mark the end of each page with "more" and the end of each release with "-30-" or "###."

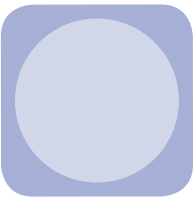
Press releases are delivered to the media the day of your *Reach Out Now* Teach-In.

How to Use a Letter to the Editor or an Op-Ed Piece

Consider submitting a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece (an opinion editorial article) to increase public awareness about the dangers of underage drinking and to engage broader participation in your *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In. Whenever possible, get a prominent community member to sign the piece. Not only will this signature make it more likely that the piece will be used, it also will give greater "weight" to the message. Offer to provide a draft letter or op-ed to encourage the leader's involvement.

A **letter to the editor**, most often, is written in prompt response to published articles. You might, for example, write a letter to the editor in response to any articles written about your Teach-In. Such a letter is an excellent opportunity to emphasize key points about alcohol use and the need for parents and other adults to talk with young children about alcohol. You also can write a letter to the editor about the harmful effects of underage drinking in response to any other articles related to the subject. For example, April is Alcohol Awareness Month and any article related to this national observation easily can be linked to the *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In message.






An **op-ed** does not have to be written in response to a previously published story. An op-ed can be used to increase community awareness of the risks associated with underage drinking and to generate support for your Teach-In. Impress upon readers the seriousness of underage drinking by inserting several key points in your text. Describe why underage drinking is harmful, include references to a recent local incident related to underage drinking (if possible), and explain how parents and others can help children avoid alcohol use. Include the author's name and title at the end of the piece. An e-mail address for contacting the author for additional information is optional.




How to Use a Proclamation


A proclamation is an official designation of an event, such as declaring April 3–7, 2006, as *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In Week. It includes several key facts, beginning with the word “Whereas,” to support the designation.



A proclamation is an effective tool for gaining public recognition of your Teach-In event because it carries the full support of a key Government official in your State or community. Governors, county executives, mayors, State legislatures, municipalities, counties, cities, or towns can issue proclamations. Contact a member of the appropriate communications office to identify the steps you need to take to get a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In Week proclamation issued.



There are several steps you can take to publicize your proclamation. If the signing takes place at a news conference, distribute printed copies to reporters. Have the proclamation photo-enlarged to poster size for display at the news conference and, afterwards, in a prominent public place. Send copies of your *Reach Out Now* Teach-In Week proclamation to local newspapers. As with any media piece, demonstrate its importance to the media's audience by including local statistics. If the Governor of your State will be issuing the *Reach Out Now* Teach-In Week proclamation, use State-level information. Information about alcohol and drug use and treatment at the State level is available from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Office of Applied Studies at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm>.



Key Points

- Approximately 10.8 million persons ages 12 to 20 (28.7 percent) report drinking alcohol during the month prior to the survey interview in 2004. Among children aged 12 to 17, an estimated 17.6 percent were current drinkers.¹
- Among youths aged 12 to 17, an estimated 17.6 percent used alcohol in the month prior to the survey interview in 2004.²
- Alcohol use among children and adolescents starts early and increases rapidly with age.³ Alcohol use by the end of the sixth grade is reported by 20.9 percent of eighth graders in 2004. More than three out of every four students (77 percent) have consumed alcohol (more than a few sips) by the end of high school; and nearly half (44 percent) have done so by the eighth grade. In fact, 60 percent of 12th graders and one-fifth (20 percent) of eighth graders reported in 2004 having been drunk at least once in their life.⁴
- Adults who had first used alcohol before age 15 are five times as likely to be dependent on alcohol as adults who first used at age 21 or older.⁵ In fact, more than one-quarter (2.0 million) of alcohol-dependent adults, age 21 or older, first used alcohol before age 14.⁶ About eighty percent, 5.5 million, first used before they were age 18. Ninety-five percent, 6.6 million, first used before age 21.⁷

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

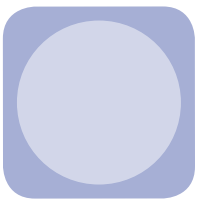
³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

⁴ Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., and Schulenberg, J.E. (2005). Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Key Findings, 2004. (NIH Publication No. 05-5726). National Institute on Drug Abuse. Bethesda, MD.

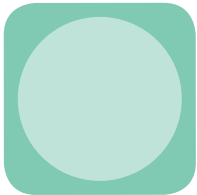
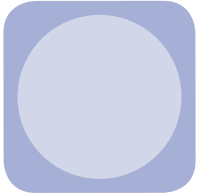
⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

⁷ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.



- Underage alcohol use is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined.^{8, 9}
- Ten percent of 9- to 10-year-olds say that they already have started drinking alcohol.¹⁰
- Perceived parental disapproval is the strongest influence on youthful alcohol use. Children who believe their parents would strongly disapprove of their using a particular substance are less likely to do so than those whose parents somewhat disapprove or neither approve or disapprove.¹¹
- Parental involvement is another important factor. In 2004, substance use was lower among youths who report that their parents always or sometimes engaged in monitoring behaviors (helping children with homework, limiting television and time out with friends on school nights, requiring them to do chores, etc.) than among youths whose parents seldom or never involved.¹²



⁸ Grunbaum, J.A., Kann, L., Kinchen, S.A., et al. (2002). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: United States, 2001. MMWR: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 51(SSO 4): 1-62.

⁹ Corley, R.P., Stallings, M.C., et al. (2002). Substance Use, Abuse and Dependence in Adolescence: Prevalence, Symptom Profiles, and Correlates.

¹⁰ Donovan, J.E. (2004). Adolescent Alcohol Initiation: A Review of Psychosocial Risk Factors. Journal of Adolescent Health 35:529. e7-18.

¹¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

¹² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (NSDUH Series H-25), DHHS Publication No. SMA-05-4062, Rockville, MD.

Sample Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

April __, 2006

Contact: Your Organization

Spokesperson

_____ (day)

_____ (evening)

_____ (e-mail)

_____ *School Fifth Graders (or Sixth Graders) to Get Sobering Lesson in Alcohol Use*

_____ School in _____ (Community) is one of hundreds of schools nationwide that will be holding a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In during April 3–7 to educate fifth-grade (or sixth-grade) students, parents, and caregivers about the harmful effects of underage drinking. _____ (Teach-In leader/guest spokesperson) will lead the discussion about why and how young people can avoid alcohol use. _____ (Your organization), in collaboration with the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has sponsored the event. New data have found that around 10.8 million youngsters ages 12–20 have used alcohol illegally. By the time they reach the eighth grade, nearly 50 percent of adolescents have had at least one drink, and 20 percent report having been “drunk.” _____ (Local statistics or a one-sentence story to reinforce importance to the community.)

What: *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In event**When:** April __, 2006, at _____ a.m./p.m.**Where:** _____ School

_____ (Address)**Who:** _____ (Teach-In leader/guest spokesperson)
_____ (Title/position)

After the program, _____ (Guest spokesperson),
Principal _____, and _____ (your organization’s
representative) will be available for interviews.



Sample Pitch Letter

[Name of editor]

[Title]



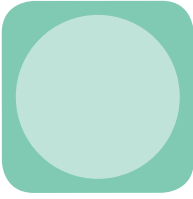
[Name of news organization]

[Address]




Dear _____ (Name):

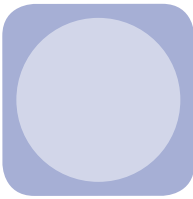
When people hear the phrase “underage drinking,” they often think of teenagers using alcohol. By the time they reach the eighth grade, nearly 50 percent of adolescents have had at least one drink, and 20 percent report having been “drunk.”



Fifth grade (or sixth grade) is not too soon to begin talking with children and youth about illegal alcohol use. On April __, 2006, at __ a.m./p.m., _____ (your organization) and _____ (guest spokesperson) will be sponsoring a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In for fifth-grade (or sixth-grade) students at _____ School in _____ (Community). *The Reach Out Now* National Teach-In is a nationwide effort by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to make fifth and sixth graders, parents, caregivers, and other adults more aware of the harmful effects of underage drinking.




Please attend our *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In. _____ School is one of hundreds of schools nationwide that will be holding a Teach-In. Children in our community need to know how to reject underage alcohol use and how potentially damaging underage drinking is to their health today and tomorrow.



Spokespeople will be available for interviews either before or immediately after the event. I would be pleased to put you in touch with them.


Sincerely,



[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your phone number]



[Your e-mail address]

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release
April __, 2006

Contact: Your Organization
Spokesperson

_____ (day)
_____ (evening)
_____ (e-mail)

_____ *School Fifth (or Sixth) Graders Get Sobering Lesson in Alcohol Use*

_____ (Your community; date).

Fifth (or sixth) graders at _____ School in _____ (community) learned about the dangers of underage alcohol use today when _____ (Teach-In leader/guest spokesperson) visited their school to participate in a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In. _____ School is one of hundreds of schools nationwide to hold a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In during the week of April 3–7 [Replace the dates, if necessary, to “in April.”] April is Alcohol Awareness Month. The *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In is a nationwide program sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to help prevent underage drinking.

“Most fifth (or sixth) graders in our community are *not* using alcohol, but it is a decision many face,” said _____ (Guest or your organization’s spokesperson). “Ten percent of 9- to 10-year-olds say that they already have started drinking alcohol. Far too many children are beginning to drink at a dangerously early age. *This Reach Out Now* Teach-In is an important step in helping our kids get a clear and consistent message at home and at school that underage drinking is dangerous, illegal, and unacceptable.”

_____ (Local statistics or story to reinforce the message; e.g., number of underage drinkers involved in traffic accidents or other community events tied to Alcohol Awareness Month.)

For the fifth year in a row, SAMHSA teamed with Scholastic Inc., to distribute alcohol prevention materials to every fifth- and sixth-grade class in America in time for Alcohol Awareness Month. Each classroom received *Reach Out Now: Talk With Your Fifth Grader About Underage Alcohol Use* or *Reach Out Now: Start Talking Before They Start Drinking* in formats for both classroom teachers and parents.

SAMHSA reports that families exert a great deal of influence on whether a child uses alcohol. “What parents may not realize,” says SAMHSA Administrator Charles G. Curie, “is that children say that their parents’ disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.” SAMHSA reports that children and teens are less likely to abuse alcohol if parents are involved in their children’s lives, make and enforce clear rules, and are positive role models.

_____ (Your organization), in collaboration with SAMHSA, led the Teach-In. SAMHSA is an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. SAMHSA partners in this effort include the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a national campaign led by Governors’ spouses to prevent use by 9- to 15-year-olds; the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); the National Family Partnership; PRIDE Youth Programs, Inc.; and Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

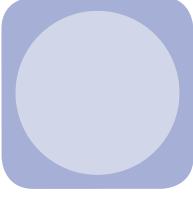
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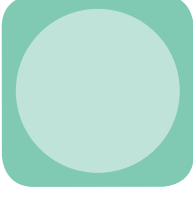
Sample Op-Ed



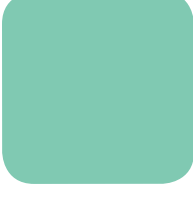
Children and Alcohol: A Sobering Thought



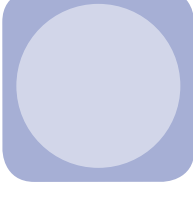
Most fifth- and sixth-grade children in our community are *not* using alcohol, but it is a decision many face. How wisely they choose is up to us. In one study, 10 percent of 9- to 10-year-olds say that they already have started drinking alcohol. By the time they reach the eighth grade, nearly 50 percent of adolescents have had at least one drink, and 20 percent report having been “drunk.” Children and teens in _____ (Community) need to know how to reject underage alcohol use and how potentially damaging underage drinking is to their health today and tomorrow. _____ (Your organization) and _____ (Guest spokesperson) have joined with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to raise public awareness about the dangers of underage drinking. As part of a nationwide effort, we will be holding a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In event for fifth (or sixth)-grade students at _____ School on April __, 2006. _____ (Guest spokesperson) will lead the discussion about why young people should reject underage drinking and how they can resist peer pressure to use alcohol. _____ School is one of hundreds of schools nationwide to hold a Teach-In for fifth or sixth graders during April 3–7. April is Alcohol Awareness Month.



The discussion about the harmful effects of underage drinking cannot stop at the school door. Talk with your child about alcohol. A clear and consistent message at school and at home that underage alcohol use is dangerous and unacceptable will reinforce a child’s ability to make healthy decisions. For more information about the subject, log onto www.teachin.samhsa.gov or call SAMHSA’s National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.



Approximately 10.8 million youth between the ages of 12 and 20 drink alcohol. In the words of SAMHSA Administrator Charles G. Curie, “The benefits from talking to your child about underage drinking can last a lifetime, and make a lifetime last.”



_____ (author), is _____ (title/organization). For further information, contact the author at _____ (e-mail address).

Sample Proclamation

Office of the [Governor, Mayor, or County Executive],
[State, City, or County] of [State, City, or County]

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, in 2004, approximately 10.8 million drinkers were under legal age (ages 12 to 20); and

WHEREAS, alcohol use among children and adolescents starts early and increases rapidly with age; and

WHEREAS, by the time they reach the eighth grade, nearly 44 percent of adolescents have used alcohol illegally at least once, and more than 20 percent report having been “drunk;” and

WHEREAS, underage alcohol use is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined [local information]; and

WHEREAS, [local statistics]; and

WHEREAS, family factors, such as parent–child relationships, discipline methods, communication, monitoring and supervision, and parental involvement, exert a significant influence on youth alcohol use; and

WHEREAS, children, with the care and support from family, friends, health professionals, teachers, clergy, and others, can avoid the negative effects of alcohol and drugs; and

WHEREAS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and [your organization’s name] invite all residents of [your city, county, or State] to participate in the *Reach Out Now* Teach-In;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [official’s full name], [Governor, Mayor, or County Executive] of [jurisdiction], do hereby proclaim **April 3–7, 2006**, as

REACH OUT NOW TEACH-IN WEEK

in [jurisdiction] and encourage parents, caregivers, and all residents of [State, city, or county] to prevent underage alcohol use by teaching children about the harmful effects of underage alcohol use and how they can resist pressure to get involved in the use of alcohol.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the [State, City, or County] of [State, City, or County], this [__]th day of [month, year].

SEAL

[Governor, Mayor, or County Executive]

Secretary of State

Notes

www.teachin.samhsa.gov

